Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of hepatitis C in a Swiss sample of men who have sex with men. Who to screen for HCV infection?

Version: 1 Date: 8 November 2013

Reviewer: Toby Lea

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This manuscript on the prevalence of HCV among MSM in Switzerland is well-written and interesting. The aims are clearly articulated and the paper was easy to follow. Some suggested revisions are as follows:

1. Page 3, paragraph 2: Please provide some data on increased HCV incidence in CASCADE.
2. Page 3, paragraph 3: It would be worth stating here that you are referring to MSM without a history of injecting drug use. It is also important to note that HIV in and of itself may increase HCV susceptibility.
3. Page 6, paragraph 4: A small point, but “practises” should be replaced with “practices” as it is a noun. Please check the remainder of the manuscript.
4. Page 7, paragraph 1: The measure “group sex” is misleading as it does not measure whether respondents have engaged in group sex. This measure should be removed from all analyses.
5. Page 7, paragraph 2: The multivariate model should be removed from the manuscript due to a lack of statistical power. With only 7 HCV-positive respondents, a multivariate analysis is not appropriate.
6. Page 8, paragraph 2: Please report the % of all respondents who were HIV-positive (n = 19).
7. Page 8, paragraph 3: Could the authors speculate on why such a high % of men did not answer the question about injecting drug use? It would be good to mention this in the Discussion.
8. Page 8, paragraph 5: This paragraph would be better placed in the subsequent section “Prevalence of hep C and number needed to test”.
9. Page 9, paragraphs 1-2: Could the authors please state the proportion of HIV-positive men who were HCV-positive, and the % of coinfected men in reference to the whole sample.
10. Page 11, paragraph 2: many studies have found associations between HCV and sexual practices such as UAI and fisting. At present these studies are not mentioned and it is misleading not to include reference to them (see Yaphe et al 2012 for a review).
11. Page 12, paragraph 3: The authors mention “methodological shortcomings” of some studies, but do not state what those shortcomings are. Could you please
provide a bit more information here.

12. Page 13, paragraph 2: The final sentence sounds like the authors are saying that sexual networks are the sole reason why HCV has been concentrated in HIV-positive MSM. This is too strong a statement, neglects other important factors, and cannot be inferred from the data presented in the manuscript.

13. Page 14, paragraph 1 / page 15, paragraph 1: I think the authors should be careful not to overstate the reach of their findings given that there were only 3 HIV-negative men who were HCV-positive. This is too small a number to be making strong inferences.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.